



Dan Artists: The Sculptors Tame, Si, Tompieme and Sõn. Their Personalities and Work

Eberhard Fischer

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In 1960, renowned art historian and cultural anthropologist Eberhard Fischer traveled to West Africa to film the workings of a group of Dan tribesmen from Liberia as they carved the wooden masks that constitute one of the Dan's most important forms of art. Signifiers of spiritual forces, the masks—adorned with raffia, fur, and feathers—play an important role in the festive performances that structure Dan village life. But beyond the masks, Fischer grew increasingly fascinated with the artists who created them, and he began collecting their stories in addition to documenting in detail the creation of their work.

The result is four fascinating biographies, available here for the first time in English. Anthropologists and collectors of African art have long been fascinated with Dan masks but never before have the artists themselves been so thoroughly recognized—an especially important contribution to our understanding of this form of West African art since the masks must often be carved in secret. Originally published in 1963, *Dan Artists* brings together Fischer's original writings, photographs, and film with many additional images and a new epilogue by Fischer in which he reflects on his journey and research.

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